Emergency Management and Response Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC)

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NOTE: *This INFOGRAM will be distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures. For further information, contact the Emergency Management and Response- Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) at (301) 447-1325 or by e-mail at* emr-isac@dhs.gov.

COOP Bolsters Resiliency

Most Emergency Services Sector (ESS) departments and agencies have become well-informed about how man-made and natural disasters can degrade their internal critical infrastructures and disrupt operations. Many of these ESS organizations decided to initialize and finalize Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning to ensure their ability to maintain or quickly reconstitute vital services for their jurisdiction during and after an all-hazards event.

Although COOP planning for catastrophes is important, the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) agrees that COOP should provide for the stability of mission-essential tasks through a wide range of emergencies. Therefore, the EMR-ISAC suggests that it is equally important to prepare for the events more likely to occur. Frequent minor emergencies caused by electrical storms, high winds, torrential rains, heavy snow, severe ice storms, etc., can potentially interrupt ESS operations and prevent mission accomplishment for short or long periods of time.

To locate best practices that bolster the continuation and resiliency (i.e., rapid restoration) of crucial functions, the EMR-ISAC reviewed the online Continuity of Operations Plan Toolkit developed by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM). Recognized as a best practice by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program, the Toolkit helps ESS organizations, local governments, and states agencies to create or update their COOP Plan.

Today's changing threat environment and recent major disasters demonstrate the need for COOP planning by ESS departments and agencies nationwide. The VDEM's COOP Plan Toolkit seen at the following link can provide assistance with either planning or revising the document: http://www.vaemergency.com/library/coop/index.cfm.

Debris Management Planning

The 2008 tornado season (January – November) is already the deadliest since 1998. To make matters worse, tropical storms and hurricanes from 1 June – 31 November (which also produce tornadoes) will coincide with the nearly year-round wildfire season. This year's natural disasters, like those of the past century, create resiliency challenges for Emergency Services Sector (ESS) departments and agencies and the communities they serve.

One frequently overlooked, but hugely consequential effect of these natural events is disaster debris, which can be millions of cubic yards of hazardous waste, building materials, electronics, vegetation, vehicles, boats, appliances, decomposing food, etc. Debris blocks transportation routes, deters arriving resources, and damages infrastructure, thereby degrading the ability of first responders and communities to perform mission-essential tasks.

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) searched for guidance regarding debris management that would assist emergency personnel and their communities to restore normal operations as soon as possible following the catastrophe. Therefore, the EMR-ISAC examined the newly updated U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) document, "Planning for Natural Disaster Debris" (March 2008).

To guide community planning, the document includes

- recommended components of a disaster debris management plan;
- management options for various debris streams (types of debris);
- federal, state, and local resources to consult in planning for natural disasters; and
- case studies of how communities prepared for and managed debris generated by recent natural disasters.

The case studies offer a view of the enormity of disaster debris management, cleanup, and removal. Federal, state, and local environmental regulations, recycling, groundwater protection, public safety and health, strategic planning, information sharing, mutual aid, and creating and maintaining a communications plan are among issues that must be addressed. Emergency responders and community leaders who contributed to the guide agree that a plan is an essential starting point they will never be without. Therefore, the EMR-ISAC suggests that first responders and community stakeholders consider using the guide to create a debris plan as an annex to existing disaster management plans. It can be downloaded at http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/debris-new/pubs/pndd.pdf. (1.90 MB, 94 pages)

CIP/CIR Planning Enables All-Hazards Response

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center (http://www.spc.noaa.gov) reports severe tornado activity in more than 28 states since the season began in January. Although these destructive and deadly events occur throughout the summer months, and peak again in October and November, they can occur at any time of year, and anywhere in the U.S., dependent upon prevailing weather conditions.

Incident accounts researched by the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) establish conclusively that tornadoes are among the ultimate tests of the intersection of Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) and Critical Infrastructure Resilience (CIR) planning, and cooperation and synchronization by Emergency Services Sector (ESS) personnel and allied agencies and organizations.

During one of more than 242 confirmed tornadoes in May, one small city experienced 30 seconds of tornado activity that caused at least one fatality and numerous injuries, destroyed 50 homes, and damaged at least 159 others. The jurisdiction's tornado plan "scripted" immediate actions such as those seen below.

- Send instant alerts to the emergency sector, city and county officials, utility workers, public health, and designated shelters.
- Use initial damage assessment to prioritize response actions.
- Call all shoring, lifting, and heavy equipment to begin clearing roads for rescuers, and call surrounding areas for assistance.
- Dispatch pre-designated deputies and troopers to clear neighborhoods, transit buses to move evacuees, utility workers to shut off gas, electricity, and water, and nongovernmental organizations to provide food and supplies.

However, the EMR-ISAC believes that the community's ability to execute the immediate actions following the tornado was contingent on solid, comprehensive pre-event all-hazards research and planning. CIP/CIR planning was necessary not only to create the list of actions, but to lay the groundwork to execute each action (e.g., ensure multiple modes and levels of communication to issue alerts, and prepare the 24X7 contact lists of heavy equipment, operators, and other resources).

The EMR-ISAC further suggests that carrying out the immediate actions would not have been possible without established working relationships among all responders to the incident developed through previous joint planning, training, and exercising. Hence, when planning for tornados, the following articles may be helpful:

http://newsok.com/mock-tornadoes-test-city-emergency-workers/article/3237429/?tm=1210194460

http://www.startribune.com/local/east/19428444.html?location_refer=East%20Metro (downloads slowly)

SAVER Program

To meet a wide variety of current challenges, including infrastructure protection and resilience, federal, state, local, and tribal Emergency Services Sector (ESS) departments and agencies have been increasing their equipment purchases. Occasionally, purchasing organizations have concerns regarding the safety, quality, reliability, and maintainability of the equipment, particularly in field environments when functioning as part of an operational system. Therefore, to assist ESS responders in making informed procurement decisions, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established the System Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders (SAVER) Program.

The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) learned that the SAVER Program conducts unbiased operational tests on commercial equipment and systems, and provides test results along with other relevant equipment information to decision makers in an operationally useful form. SAVER specifically provides information about equipment found on the DHS Authorized Equipment List (AEL).

The SAVER Program Support Office (SPSO) maintains a suite of web-based SAVER publications, including program highlights, summaries, newsletters, and other material that is useful to ESS decision makers. Additionally, the SPSO provides technical writing support and coordination of the program's technical agents. To review the SAVER AEL Category/Project listing or to contact the SPSO, click on the following link: https://saver.fema.gov/default.aspx.

The National Infrastructure Coordinating Center (NICC) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Infrastructure Protection is the central point for notifications regarding infrastructure threats, disruptions, intrusions, and suspicious activities. Emergency Services Sector personnel are requested to report any incidents or attacks involving their infrastructures using at least the first and second points of contact seen below:

1) NICC - Voice: 202-282-9201, Fax: 703-487-3570, E-Mail: *nicc@dhs.gov*
2) Your local FBI office - Web: *http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm*
3) EMR-ISAC - Voice: 301-447-1325, E-Mail: *emr-isac@dhs.gov*, fax: 301-447- 1034, Web: *www.usfa.dhs.gov/subjects/emr-isac*, Mail: J-247, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727